

Docket No. ATOTP0100USSerial No. 09/981,587AMENDMENTIN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please insert the following at page 10, between present lines 21 and 22, as a new paragraph:

B1 In one embodiment, the conditioner further comprises a complexing agent.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 7 and 21 to read as follows:

1. (Amended) A method of forming a conductive metal layer on a non-conductive surface, comprising:

providing a non-conductive surface;

B2 contacting the non-conductive surface with an aqueous solution or mixture containing a stannous salt to form a sensitized surface;

contacting the sensitized surface with an aqueous solution or mixture containing a silver salt having a pH in the range from about 5 to about 10 to form a catalyzed surface substantially free of palladium; and

electroless plating the catalyzed surface by applying an electroless plating solution to the catalyzed surface.

B3 7. (Amended) The method of claim 5, wherein the conditioner further comprises a reducing agent.

21. (Amended) A method of forming a conductive metal layer on a non-conductive surface, comprising:

B4 providing a non-conductive surface;

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Docket No. ATOTPO100USSerial No. 09/981,587

applying a conditioner to the non-conductive surface to form a conditioned surface;

contacting the conditioned surface with an aqueous stannous salt to form a sensitized surface;

contacting the sensitized surface with an aqueous solution or mixture containing a silver salt at a pH in the range from about 6 to about 9 to form a catalyzed surface substantially free of palladium; and

electroless plating the catalyzed surface by applying an electroless plating solution to the catalyzed surface.

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A version of the above amended claims marked to indicate the specific amendments may be found in the attached Appendix, in accordance with 37 CFR 1.121(c)(1).

Please add the following new claim 25:

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25. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the aqueous solution or mixture containing a silver salt is substantially free of palladium.

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present Reply, claims 1-25 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 7 and 21 are amended and new claim 25 is added herein. Support for the amendment of claims 1 and 21 may be found, for example, in original claim 22 and bridging from page 1, line 22 to page 2, line 1. Support for new claim 25 may be found, for example in original claim 22. Claim 7 has been amended to add a period at the end of the claim. No new matter is contained in the claim amendments.

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